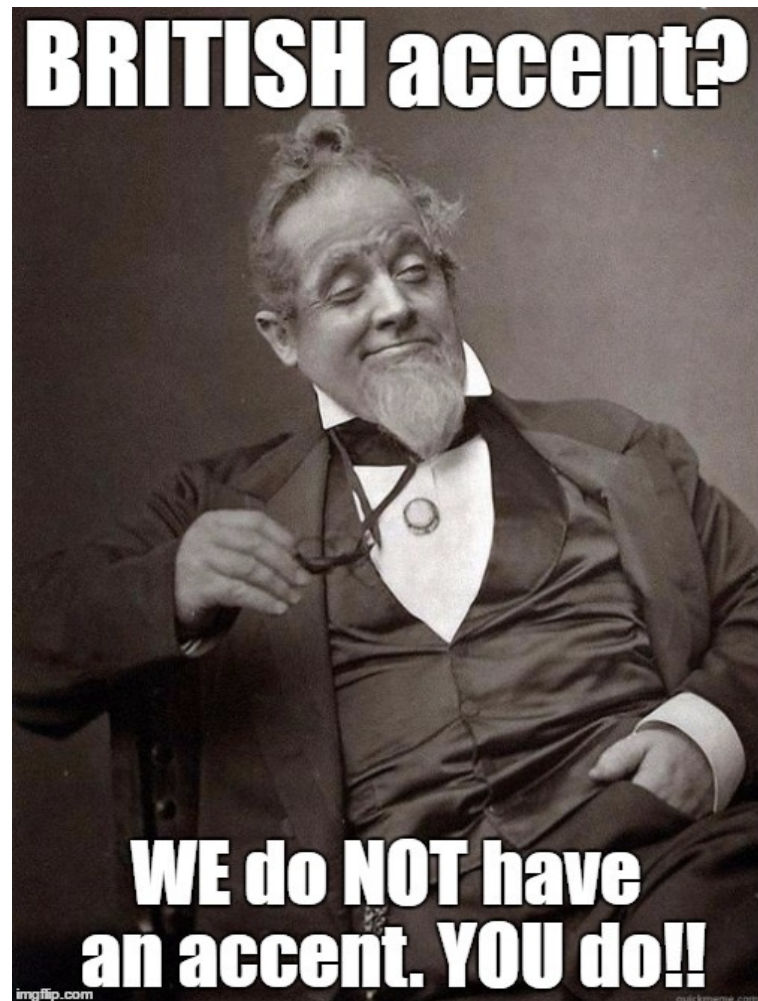

INTRODUCTION TO LINGUISTICS II

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SPRING 2025

A-KAP, Π-Ω





TODAY'S TOPICS

- Sociolinguistics: Language and Regional Variation
 - The standard language.
 - Accent and dialect.
 - Regional dialects.
 - Isoglosses and dialect boundaries.
 - The dialect continuum.
 - Bilingualism and diglossia.
 - Language planning.
 - Pidgins and creoles.
- You can study these topics in:
 - George Yule: [Chapter 18](#).

LANGUAGE AND REGIONAL VARIATION

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLINGUISTICS

SOCIOLINGUISTICS

- **Sociolinguistics** is concerned with the study of the social dimensions of language use.
 - As language users, people learn not only the structure of a given language but also the **social and cultural norms and expectations** regarding language use, including what and how to communicate within their social groups, communities, cultures, and societies.
- Sociolinguists examine how **social, geographic, cultural, and personal factors** influence how people around the world use language – individually and collectively.
 - In other words, sociolinguists study the **variation** that exists in the use of language.



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graph TD; Variation --> Regional; Variation --> Social
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Variation

Regional

Social

Five levels

1. Phonological variation
 - Speakers pronounce their words differently.
2. Lexical variation
 - Speakers use words that are specific to their varieties.
3. Morphological variation
 - Speakers use word endings differently.
4. Syntactic variation
 - Speakers use different syntactic constructions.
5. Pragmatic variation
 - Speakers behave differently in conversation.

THE STANDARD LANGUAGE

- It is an **idealized** variety, but exists for most people as the version that is accepted as the **official language** of their community or country.

WHERE IS THE SL FOUND?

- In printed books and newspapers.
- Used in mass media.
- Taught at school.
- Taught as a second or foreign language.

EXAMPLES

1. *We're not coming* (standard English)
2. *We ain't coming* (non-standard English dialect)

[Exercise 1](#)

LANGUAGE AND REGIONAL VARIATION

ACCENT AND DIALECT

ACCENT

- It refers to the description of **aspects of pronunciation** that identify where an individual speaker is from, **regionally or socially**.
 - We all speak with an accent!

DIALECTS

- A dialect is a language variety that differs from other varieties in **pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary**.
 - However, such differences do not impede communication among speakers (**mutual intelligibility**), although some dialects may deviate a lot from the standard variety.
- From the point of view of modern linguistics, all dialects are **equal**.
 - There are **no linguistic criteria** for saying that a particular dialect is ‘better’ or superior to another.
- Rather, political, historical, cultural, or economic reasons **determine** which dialect will become the standard (e.g., the Peloponnese dialect in Greece).
 - Thus, some varieties become **more prestigious**.

DIALECT: EXAMPLES

- Examples of accents and dialects in, and outside, the UK:
 - <http://www.ling.ed.ac.uk/research/gsound>

EXAMPLES OF ENGLISH DIALECTS

- Some English dialects:
 - Received Pronunciation
 - Cockney (East London)
 - East Anglian (Norfolk, Suffolk and North Essex)
 - Black British English
 - Geordie (Newcastle upon Tyne)
 - Scouse (Merseyside)
 - Mancunian-Salfordian (Manchester & Salford)
 - ...

PRONUNCIATION VARIATION

Pronunciation variation

- /gɒd/
- /gɑd/
- /gæd/



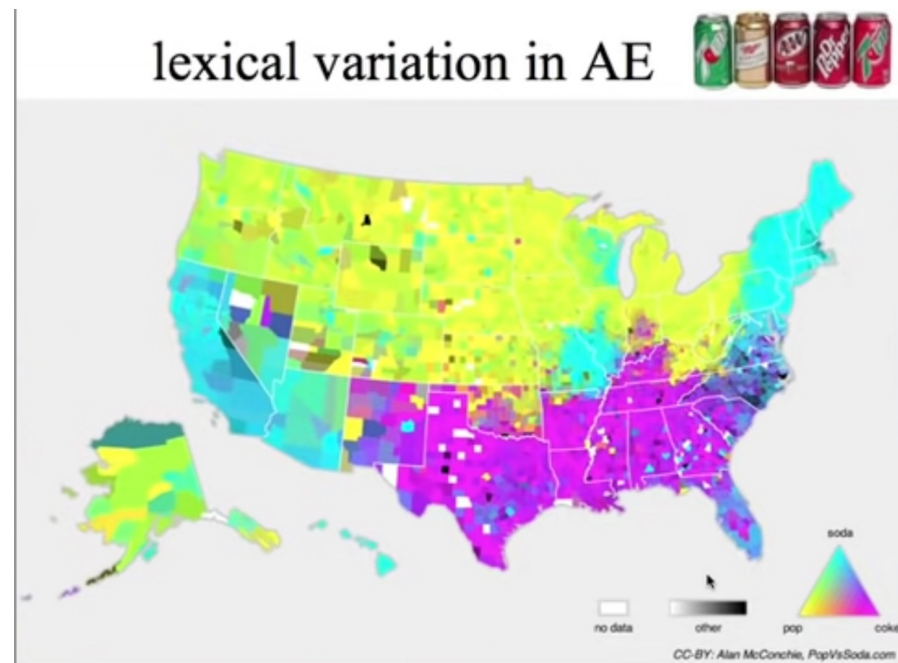
- /bʌtə/
- /bʌʔə/
- /bʌrər/
- /bʌtə/



EXAMPLES OF ACCENT

- The pronunciation of *car* and *year* in British and American accents (variation in /r/).
- The pronunciation of *beautiful* in the south and the north of London (variation in /ju/ and /u:/ respectively).
- The pronunciation of *but* and *bus* in the south and the north of England (variation of /a/ and /u/ respectively).

LEXICAL VARIATION IN AMERICAN ENGLISH



AMERICAN VS BRITISH ENGLISH

- The dialectal variation between *Have you got the time?* in British English vs. *Do you have the time?* in American English.
- The dialectal variation between *lift* (British English) and *elevator* (American English).

[Exercises 2-5](#)

LANGUAGE AND REGIONAL VARIATION

REGIONAL DIALECTS

REGIONAL DIALECTS

- Variation in a language conditioned by the **geographical area** where the language is spoken.

DIALECTOLOGY

- Dialectology is the **study of dialects**.
 - The dialectologist's task is to identify and describe those **differences** in grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation that define different dialects.
- As already said, a criterion for distinguishing between a dialect and a language is **mutual intelligibility**.
 - This means that the speakers of each need to be able to **understand** each other.

DIALECTOLOGY: SOME ISSUES

- However, mutual intelligibility is **not always** an accurate criterion.
 - Norwegians claim that they can understand Swedish (different languages).
 - Cantonese speakers cannot understand Mandarin speakers (dialects of the same language, i.e. Chinese).
 - Serbo-Croatian was spoken in former Yugoslavia. Nowadays, Serbians, Croatians and Bosnians claim that they speak different languages.

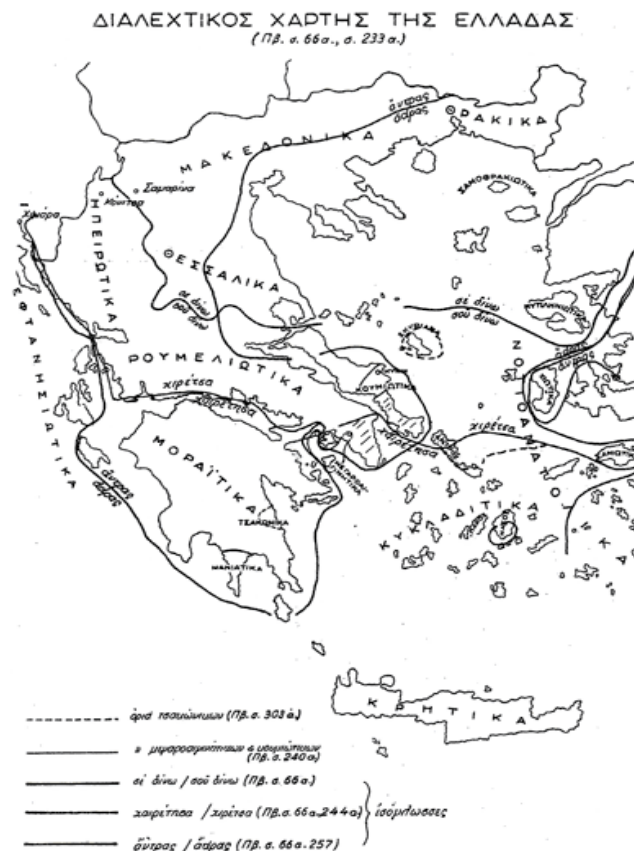
LANGUAGE AND REGIONAL VARIATION

ISOGLOSSES AND DIALECT BOUNDARIES

A DIALECT ATLAS

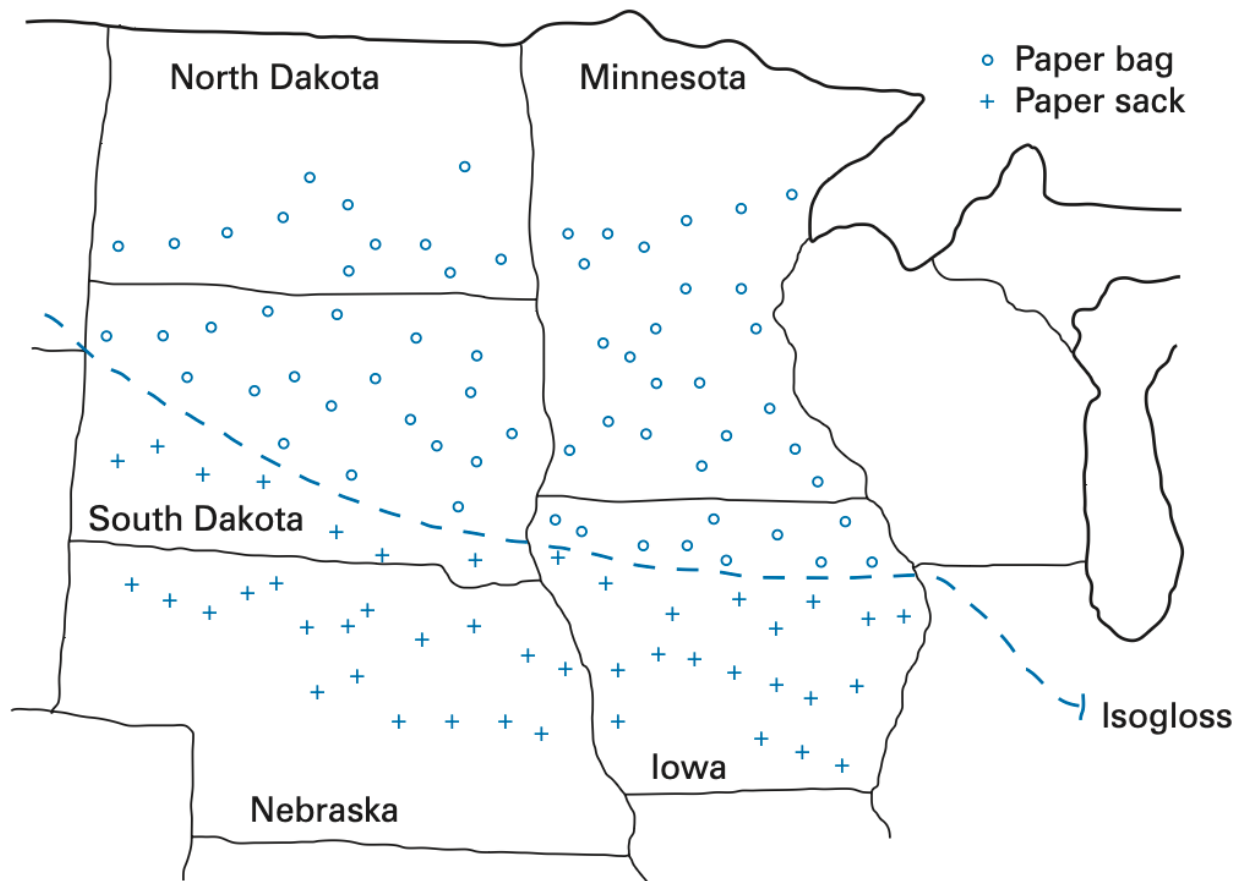
- It is a map that displays the **geographical distribution** of different dialects.

AN EXAMPLE: MODERN GREEK DIALECTS



ISOGLOSSES: DEFINITION

- An isogloss, also called a heterogloss (see Etymology below), is the **geographic boundary** of a certain linguistic feature, such as the pronunciation of a vowel, the meaning of a word, or the use of some morphological or syntactic feature.
 - It appears as **a line on a dialect map**, which marks off an area that uses a particular variant from another neighbouring area that uses a different variant.
- As suggested by the definition above, the term applies to **phonological, grammatical, and lexical features**.
 - e.g., the use of *paper bag* in Northern dialect of Midwest America vs. *paper sack* in Midland dialect of Midwest America.



DIALECT BOUNDARY

- When a number of isoglosses come together, **a more solid line** can be drawn, which indicates a dialect boundary.

NORTHERN VS SOUTHERN GREEK DIALECTS



DIALECT CONTINUUM

- At most dialect boundary areas, one dialect or language variety **merges** with another.
 - Regional variation is better viewed as a **dialect continuum** rather than as having sharp breaks from one region to the next.

LANGUAGE AND REGIONAL VARIATION

BILINGUALISM AND DIGLOSSIA

BILINGUALISM I

- In many countries, regional variation is not simply a matter of two (or more) dialects of a single language but can involve two (or more) quite **distinct and different languages**.
 - e.g., Canada is an **officially bilingual** country.

BILINGUALISM 2

- When referring to an **individual**, bilingualism is the result of two parents who speak different languages.

DIGLOSSIA: DEFINITION

- In **diglossia**, there is typically:
 - a **low variety (spoken language)** acquired locally and used for everyday affairs, and
 - a **high variety (written language)** learned at school and used for important and institutional matters.
- A prime example of diglossia was the use of *katharevousa* and *dimotiki* in Greece before 1976.

DIGLOSSIA: EXAMPLES

- In Arab speaking countries:
 - the high variety (Classical Arabic) is used in formal lectures, serious political events, religious discussions, etc.
 - the low variety is the local Egyptian Arabic, Tunisian Arabic, Lebanese Arabic, etc.

[Exercise 6](#)

LANGUAGE AND REGIONAL VARIATION

LANGUAGE PLANNING

LANGUAGE PLANNING: DEFINITION

- It concerns **planning** which variety or varieties of the languages spoken in a particular country are to be used for official business.

LANGUAGE PLANNING: STEPS

- The **process** of establishing a national official language involves five interrelated steps:
 - **Selection:** choosing the variety (to be developed).
 - **Codification:** standardising its structural or linguistic features (dictionaries, grammar books to be written, etc.).
 - **Elaboration:** extending its functions for use in other domains (all aspects of social life, literature, etc.).
 - **Implementation:** promoting the use of the standard variety.
 - **Acceptance:** accepting the variety as the national language by the majority of the population.

LANGUAGE AND REGIONAL VARIATION

PIDGINS AND CREOLES

PIDGIN: DEFINITION

- A pidgin is:
 - a variety of a language (e.g., English) that developed for some **practical purpose**, such as trading
 - among groups of people who had a lot of **contact**
 - but who **did not know each other's languages**.

PIDGIN: EXAMPLE

- Tok Pisin, spoken in Papua New Guinea.
- **Lexifier** language (main source of words): English
 - *tu buk* (two books)
 - *di gyal place* (the girl's place)
 - *bilong* (your)
 - *buk bilong yu* (your book)

CHARACTERISTICS OF PIDGINS

- Somewhat limited vocabulary.
- Simple grammatical morphology.
- Plural suffix –s and the possessive form ('s) on nouns are rare.
- Use of functional, instead of inflectional, morphemes:
 - e.g., use of *bilong* instead of changing *you* to *your*.
- Syntax in pidgins is quite unlike the syntax of the languages from which terms were borrowed and modified.

CREOLE

- When a pidgin develops beyond its role as a trade or contact language and becomes **the first language of a social community** it is described as a creole.
 - Tok Pisin is now a creole.
 - French creoles in Haiti.
 - English creoles in Jamaica and Sierra Leone.

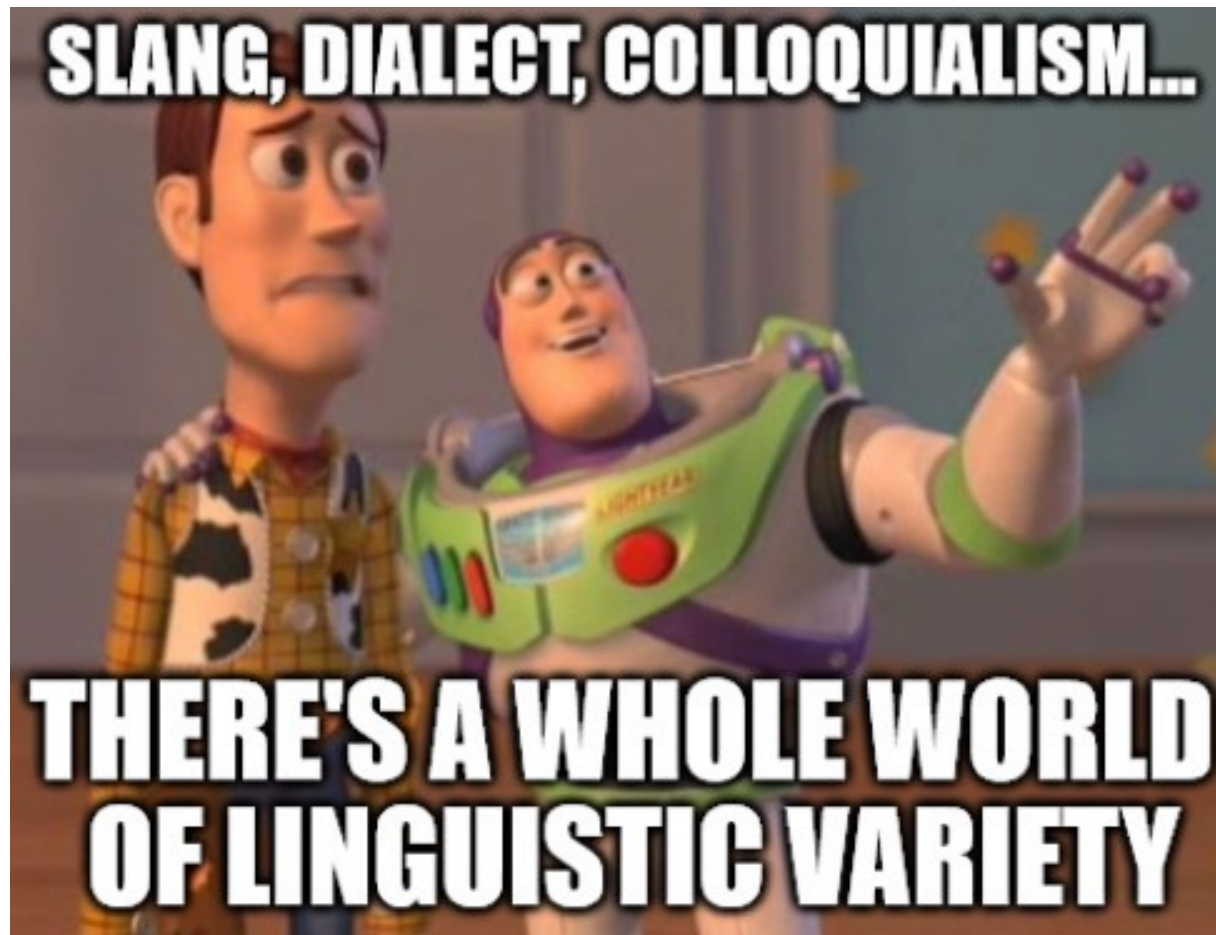
POST-CREOLE CONTINUUM

- **Creolisation:**
 - a gradual process with which a pidgin **develops** into a creole.
- **Decreolisation:**
 - where education and greater social prestige are associated with a 'higher' variety (e.g., British English in Jamaica), a number of speakers will tend to use **fewer creole forms and structures**.
- **Post-creole continuum:**
 - this leads to **a continuum of varieties** with the external standard model at one extreme and a basic variety with local creole features at the other.

AN EXAMPLE: JAMAICA

- Consider the situation that exists in Jamaica:
 - people from upper and middle class speak the English variety.
 - people from lower middle class and working class speak the intermediate varieties.
 - people from the lower working class and farmers speak the creole variety.

[Exercise 7](#)



SUMMARY

- **The standard language:** an idealized variety, which for most people serves as the version that is accepted as the official language of their community or country.
- **Accent:** it refers to the description of aspects of pronunciation that identify where an individual speaker is from, regionally or socially.
- **Dialect:** it refers to features of grammar and vocabulary, as well as aspects of pronunciation.
- **Regional dialects:** a criterion for distinguishing between a dialect and a language is mutual intelligibility.

SUMMARY

- **Isogloss:** it is a term used for a line drawn on a dialect map which marks off an area which uses a particular variant from another neighbouring area which uses a different variant.
- **Dialect boundaries:** when a number of isoglosses come together a more solid line can be drawn, which indicates a dialect boundary.
- **The dialect continuum:** regional variation is better viewed as a dialect continuum rather than having sharp breaks from one region to the next.

SUMMARY

- **Bilingualism:** when two (or more) distinct and different languages are spoken in one country. Bilingualism is also the result of having two parents who speak different languages.
- **Diglossia:** in diglossia there is typically a 'low' variety acquired locally and used for everyday affairs and a 'high' variety learned in school and used for important and institutional matters.
- **Language planning:** concerns planning which variety or varieties of the languages spoken in a particular country are to be used for official business.

SUMMARY

- **Pidgin:** a variety of a language (e.g., English) that developed for some practical purpose, such as trading, among groups of people who had a lot of contact, but who did not know each other's languages.
- **Creole:** when a pidgin develops beyond its role as a trade or contact language and becomes the first language of a social community it is described as a creole.

THE [U] VS. [ʌ] ISOGLOSS IN ENGLAND (BASED ON TRUDGILL AND CHAMBERS 1980: 128)



NEXT WEEK...

- Language and Social Variation:
 - Sociolinguistics.
 - Social dialects.
 - Education and occupation.
 - Social markers.
 - Speech style and style-shifting.
 - Prestige.
 - Speech accommodation.
 - Register and jargon.
 - Slang.
 - Social barriers.
 - Vernacular language.